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## The Life and Death of Alfred Rosenberg

by Peter Peel



ALFRED ROSENBERG was born on the twelfth day of January, 1893 and was hanged at Nuremberg at 1:49 A.M. on the morning of 16. October 1946. He was the fourth man of the ten on whom Master-Sergeant John C. Woods performed his grisly task as hangman on that cold, black night. Adolf Hitler had died by his own hand on 30 April, 1945 as the Russian army closed inexorably around the last redoubt of the *Reichskanzlei* bunker. As a captive of the Russians, it is unlikely that he would ever have been brought to any kind of trial-even such as the Nuremberg proceedings. Like Sultan Bayazid in the hands of Timur, or Emelyan Pugachev at the mercy of that enlightened monarch, Catherine the Great, Hitler would probably have ended in an iron cage, suspended from the Kremlin walls and reduced, no doubt, to a mindless vegetable by the inquisitors who had learned their trade so well in the Lubianka cellars. And such was the prevailing mood of the times, even in the Western democracies, that it is doubtful that any voices would have been heard protesting.

Heinrich Himmler, too, had poisoned himself and Dr. Paul Josef Goebbels, his wife and their six children had perished in the same manner on the day following the death of Hitler and Eva Braun. Martin Bormann had disappeared. He was nevertheless sentenced to death in absentia –a procedure unknown to British or American jurisprudence– at Nuremberg. It seems most likely now that Bormann perished in the streets of Berlin in an attempt to escape and that his body was simply blown to bits by some chance high-explosive shell.

Then there was the *Reichs-Marschall*, Hermann Goering, jovial, ebullient, bon vivant, art lover, commander of the Richthofen squadron in World War 1. Goering was probably the most charismatic figure in the National Socialist hierarchy after Hitler himself. He was deputy Führer until the last few days and always the unquestioned number-two man in the Reich. At Nuremberg, his courage and wit frequently discomfited the duller minds of the prosecuting team and, at the end, less than two hours before his scheduled hanging, he was to cheat the eager hangman with a cyanide capsule he had managed to secrete on his person.

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The sentiments of those who thus escaped the victor's vengeance were no doubt those of Brutus at Philippi –

Thou seest the world, Volumnius, how it goes.  
Our enemies have beat us to the pit.  
It is more worthy to leap in ourselves  
Than tarry till they push us.

Thus of the twenty-two men indicted before the International Military Tribunal (IMT) at Nuremberg, one had never been present and one took his own life before the sentence of death could be carried out. Of the remaining twenty, three were acquitted of the charges brought against them, Hjalmar Schacht, Franz von Papen and Hans Fritzsche.

It is not my purpose in this brief introduction to discuss the Nuremberg trials in any great detail, nor yet the public rationale for them. At the time they were arranged for and conducted, I was still a serving officer in the Royal Air Force of Great Britain and had spent some six years fighting the Germans and Japanese. Nevertheless, the whole concept of trying the leaders of a defeated enemy nation for crimes which were only defined retroactively (*ex postfacto* „law“) in a court in which the prosecution and the judicial bench belonged to the same party, where normal rules of evidence were suspended in advance and where the *tu quoque* defense („You did the same thing“) was disallowed, disturbed and distressed me. I had been raised to believe in the impeccable majesty and justice of British law and, indeed, with some naiveté perhaps, in its superiority over that of all other nations.

It did not help to read a headline in the British newspaper with the largest daily circulation-about 4,000,000-which crowed „We Shall Try Them And Hang Them.“ Nor did the fact that by 1946 few people in the West had any doubts that the ghastly Katyn Forest and associated massacres of some 15,000 helpless Polish officer POWs had been perpetrated by one of the parties which were about to sit on the bench of the International Military Tribunal. Many of us in the armed forces knew much more than that. We knew, although we did not talk about it very much, that the most dreadful atrocities had been committed by all the major parties in the war that had just concluded. And in the years that have followed, our knowledge of that aspect has increased prodigiously.

But I was only a junior officer and very young. There were a number of prominent men, far more important and knowledgeable than a mere flight lieutenant, who were disturbed and distressed. And it is very doubtful if any of them could have been accused of sympathy with the ideology of National Socialism or even with the Germans as a nation. Apart from a long list of eminent scholars and revisionist historians-too long to attempt to catalogue here-there were in England such men as The Very Reverend William Inge, Dean of St. Paul's, or the attorney, F.J.P. Veale, whose book, *Advance to Barbarism*, is still one of the most effective critiques of the Nuremberg mentality. And in the United States, Senator Robert A. Taft knowingly sacrificed his career and a fair chance at the American Presidency by speaking publicly against the implementation of *ex post facto* law as repugnant to the whole tradition of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence and the letter and spirit of the United States Constitution. That this was political suicide -and Taft knew it- is a thought for the younger reader to ponder while trying to comprehend the fanatical spirit of vengeance which dominated the era. President John F. Kennedy well understood the nature of Taft's deed and honored him for it in his book, *Profiles in Courage*.

How different it all is today! We have learned so many things in recent years -the truth about the sinking of the Lusitania in World War 1, for example; or the truth about the Churchill-Lindemann-Harris policy of terror bombing. Much, much else. Or is it really so different? The publishing houses, many of them, and a *fortiori* the movies and television, remind us almost daily of the thesis of a special Teutonic diabolism. \*


\* In early 1981 it was revealed that Churchill had made plans to rain mustard gas and deadly anthrax bombs on German civilian centers. If the war had not ended when it did, his plans would have been carried out and large areas of Germany, even today (1981) would not be habitable. Hitler, however, never seriously considered the use of gas except in retaliation to gas attacks. One reason, perhaps, is that Hitler was himself a victim of British gas warfare in the trenches of the First World War.-Ed.

At the time of this writing, thirty-five years have passed since the end of World War II. Can we possibly find some historical analog -not too distant- the events which have taken place in the intervening years? Perhaps that would help us to gauge the truth or falsity implicit in the title of Veale's book.

In 1792, the French Revolutionary government began a virtually continuous war of aggression for the next twenty-three years against most of the rest of Europe. Its purposes were twofold: to rally and unite factions within the nation, and to seize the territory and exploit the resources of its neighbors. By 1796, the career of Napoleon Bonaparte was in full

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flower. For nineteen more years, the Napoleonic armies marched and countermarched across all Europe, drenching the soil of the continent in blood. Belgium, Holland and much of Italy and western Germany were annexed directly to France. The art treasures of the conquered peoples were looted. Forced contributions of money and manpower were exacted from the satellite nations. Political enemies were assassinated. General Napoleon became dictator of France by a *coup d'état* in 1799, and emperor in 1804.

When, in 1814, Napoleon was first defeated by the vast coalition ranged against him („How many crows were ye against the dying eagle? „) he abdicated and was granted sovereignty over the Italian island of Elba. He escaped and returned to France in 1815, raised more armies and resumed the war. After his final defeat at Waterloo, he again abdicated and was taken to the Atlantic island of St. Helena. On the way, the ship docked at Plymouth where English crowds turned out, not to gloat or to jeer, but to pay their respects to their fallen foe. Napoleon spent the remaining six years of his life on St. Helena writing his memoirs and living, with a suitable staff of aides and servants, in relative comfort (apart from some petty irritations inflicted by the rather spiteful governor). In 1840, his body was brought home to France and entombed magnificently in *Les Invalides*. There he lies, surrounded by murals of his greatest victories, to this day the supreme national hero of France. When Queen Victoria visited Paris, she went to see Napoleon's tomb and there she made her young son kneel in homage.

By 1918, the chivalrous and aristocratic ethos had long given place to that of *homo vulgaris*, democracy *triumphans*. And so there was heard much talk of hanging the Kaiser. But it was only splenetic prattle. He had sought refuge in Holland and no great pressure was exerted upon the Dutch to surrender him. In any event, he lived out his life as a comfortable country squire on his estate at Doom. As a final note on this part of our topic, it may be remarked that the terms imposed on Prussia in 1807 were far more severe than those imposed on France in 1815; and the terms imposed on Germany in 1919 were savagely punitive and „Carthaginian“ compared with those imposed on France by Germany in 1871.

But it was not until 1945 that the victors finally progressed to the level of the Book of Esther or the story of Samuel and Agag. Could it be that this was the ultimate triumph of Christianity? That we were at last taking the Bible as a serious guide to conduct? Or was it a triumph of democracy as in the Book of Esther or the story of Samuel and Agag. Could it be that something!

The defendants at Nuremberg were separately charged on two, three or four counts. Twelve men, including Rosenberg, were charged on all four counts. These were:

1. Conspiracy to wage war.
2. Crimes against peace.
3. War crimes.
4. Crimes against humanity.

Richard Harwood (Nuremberg and Other War Crimes Trials) comments as follows:

THE CHARGES could have been drawn up by some poet or philosopher, for no specific item of legislation passed by any specified legislature was alleged to have been broken. For someone to be charged with a crime necessitates their breaking a law. No country had, or has, a law against waging war. Neither does any country have a law against waging „aggressive“ war. Who defines the aggression? When Britain and France invaded Egypt in 1956, their leaders and generals were not arrested and charged with waging aggressive war.

Every single one of the charges could have been equally well laid at the Allies door. Consider:

1. Conspiracy to wage war
  - the Anglo-French-planned invasion of Norway
  - Stalin's planned invasion of Poland
  - Roosevelt's plans to enmesh the USA in the war.

2. Crimes against peace
  - Stalin's invasion of Poland and Finland
  - Britain's invasion of Iraq [and Iran]
  - Britain's sinking of the French fleet at Oran
  - American invasion of Iceland and Greenland.

3. War crimes
  - the wanton destruction of German cities



the Soviet' murder and ill-treatment of German POWs  
the use of Germans as slave laborers after the war in all  
the Allied European countries.

#### 4. Crimes against humanity

the Soviet massacre of the Poles at Katyn  
the Anglo-American bombing of civilian targets  
the Soviet atrocities against their own people before  
and during the war.

Harwood has by no means exhausted the list. Individual acts of the most appalling sadism and cruelty were committed by Allied soldiers against both Germans and Japanese who had already surrendered. Incidents of rape and looting were a feature of all the Allied occupation forces in the early days, but the wholesale and unchecked rape of the women, girls and boys in Berlin, the looting and sacking of that city by the armies of Marshals Zhukov and Koniev, and the instant killing of any German civilian who tried to shield his womenfolk, make the horrors of the Thirty Years War read like an exercise in knightly and gentlemanly conduct.

But amid the cant and solemnity of the Nuremberg „trials,“ the victors would not accept any charges of misconduct against themselves. Alfred Rosenberg was found guilty on all four counts and, as we have already noted, met his end on the gallows on the morning of the 16th of October, 1946. He left behind a widow and a young daughter.

Who was this rather quiet and withdrawn-even shy-man with the somewhat bland good looks of an upper-class English senior civil servant? By all accounts he was, in his personal life, a kind man, rather humorless, incorruptible. There was neither cynicism nor pragmatism in his fanatical dedication to the National Socialist ideology but the fanaticism only became eloquent in his writing. He lacked the extrovert geniality to be a good conversationalist. This introversion was certainly not characteristic of the generality of the Nazi leaders-not even of Hess whose withdrawal appears to have developed as a result of his treatment by his British captors after his peace-seeking flight to Scotland, in 1941. Rosenberg seems to have been the buff of a good deal of rough humor in p circles, and not the least on account of his name Which, In was thought of as typically Jewish, although in the Baltic area from where he came it was commonly a gentile name also. Yet Rosenberg remained always totally loyal and, apart from Hitler himself, was the only member of the party to remain prominent from the earliest days until the very end. But he was not equipped by training or temperament for the rough and tumble of practical affairs.

Rosenberg's tastes and interests lay in classical music, architecture, and above all in literary and philosophical matters. Among the great German philosophers, the works of Immanuel Kant and Arthur Schopenhauer seem to have made the deepest and most lasting impression. But he was a voracious reader. He certainly read Ernst Haeckel, probably the most famous of the German Indologists. He read a great deal of the Aryan literature of ancient India, especially the Rig Veda. and it is evident that he was well-acquainted with the *Zend Avesta*, the sacred book of ancient, pre-Islamic Persia. He steeped himself in the classical history of Greece and Rome and especially in classical mythology. This almost omnivorous and self-directed study, together with his personal experiences in revolutionary Russia and post-war Germany, were the two pillars upon which he constructed his final and passionate world-view.

His vocation, however, as he saw it and as he partially fulfilled it, was to become the custodian of the party ideology and the author of a magnum opus which would provide National Socialism with a definitive theory of history as a function of race. That work *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts-* (The Myth of the Twentieth Century).

National Socialist orthodoxy was never as monolithic nor as all-embracing as that of Marx and Lenin. There was, of course, agreement on the major issues-that World Jewry was the irreconcilable enemy of all Aryan civilization and culture and especially of Germany; that the punitive clauses of the Treaty of Versailles were intolerable and must be rejected; that all Germans must understand and feel their spiritual unity as a true *Volk* and that distinctions and rivalries of class and faction must disappear. But apart from such general principles, there was a wide variety of opinions an(f philosophic positions. Rosenberg was well aware of this and at considerable pains in his Introduction to emphasize that the *Mythos* was a personal philosophy. He is, for example, almost as violent. anti-Catholic as he is anti-Jewish and only relatively less anti-Protestant. He is, in fact, anti-Christian. Yet most of the party rank and file were Christian, and Germany is half Catholic.

Jesus of Nazareth, he thought, was a great man whose teachings hi been corrupted by a clever Jew, Paul of Tarsus. In the following centuries, the Catholic church had evolved an elaborate theology and ceremonial which had nothing in common with the Founder and was,



in fact, a resurgence of degraded Leveantine-Etruscan superstitions decked out in spuriously „Christian“ forms.

But Rosenberg's quarrel with the Catholics was not simply or solely a matter of theology. There was in Germany a powerful Catholic political party, the *Zentrum Partei*. Even Bismarck, in the nineteenth century, had seen the political nature of the Catholics in Germany as a danger to the internal peace and new-won unification of the nation. It must be remembered that the Second Reich which came into being in January 1871 and expired in November 1918 was never a strongly centralized State. It contained four kingdoms-Prussia, Bavaria, Württemberg and Saxony, five grand duchies, thirteen duchies, three free cities and the Imperial Territory ... of Elsass-Lothringer had been a dream which only . . . three short but bitter wars had been able to realize. Bavaria, Württemberg and the Rhineland were predominantly Catholic, and separatist tendencies always threatened to surface in time of crisis encouraged by France and, at least in the view of Protestant Prussia, aggravated by the recently proclaimed doctrine of Papal infallibility which had set all Protestant Europe by the ears. The ultramontanism which had developed as a reaction to the Napoleonic and French Revolutionary wars was fundamentally anti-nationalist. It was so seen even in Catholic Italy where the conflict between Italian nationalism and the Vatican was called „the Roman Question“ and was not resolved until Mussolini's Concordat with the Pope in 1929. There was a strong anti-clerical party in France. And so, in Prussia the struggle against political Catholicism was waged by Bismarck under the banner of the *Kulturkampf* and the so-called „May“ or „Falk“ laws of 1873. The Jesuits were also expelled from the territory of the Reich.

In the first few years following World War 1, there were renewed dangers of separatism in Catholic Bavaria and, even more seriously in the Rhineland, where the separatist movement was encouraged by the French government and the French armies of occupation. It is in the light of the foregoing that we must consider Rosenberg's attacks upon the Catholic church-not as an explicit political philosophy, perhaps, but rather as a kind of gut-level perception of an irreconcilably inimical force in the national body. Before deriding this as the „backward“ attitudes of *Mittleuropa* sixty years ago, Americans might usefully remind themselves that when John Kennedy was seeking the Democratic nomination, sophisticated American politicians expressed doubts as to whether a Catholic would be acceptable to the American people as their president and many ordinary citizens of Protestant persuasion were genuinely alarmed that the White House might become a branch office of the Vatican.

What of Rosenberg's yet greater enemy, the Jew? In some ways, the explanation is simpler and in others more profoundly complex than his hostility to the Catholics. There was a certain amount of literary and intellectual anti-Semitism in Germany and Hapsburg Austria in the nineteenth century, but it was hardly more than that which also existed in contemporary England. In England, for example, Punch, the popular humorous magazine, frequently featured derogatory cartoons and verses involving Jews. Lord Salisbury, and other prominent Englishmen, called Disraeli „an unscrupulous Jew.“

People who found themselves in financial difficulties and had to resort to money lenders were said, pityingly, to be „in the hands of the Jews.“ And the very word „Jew“ was and is used as a verb, as in the expression, to Jew one down.“

In Russia, anti-Jewish sentiment was much stronger and combined two elements, peasant religiosity and the political perception of the anarchistic, revolutionary and terrorist movements as being heavily Jewish in their leadership. But it was probably in France where animosity to the Jews was strongest. The early years of the Third Republic were beset by a number of financial scandals which caused grievous losses to the small investors and considerable suffering. When a number of these were uncovered and Jewish financiers figured very prominently, a bitter anti-Semitism prevailed in France which reached its apogee in the Dreyfus case. One perhaps should also mention Poland, at that time part of the domains of the Russian Tsar, where anti-Semitism was pandemic and where it persisted at least until the end of the Second World War, since when its overt expression has become a criminal offense.

Rosenberg's anti-Semitism may have had its earliest roots in his youth as a subject of the Tsar. But it was doubtless his personal and direct experience of living in Moscow at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution that made the greatest initial impression. There is no longer any real dispute among honest historians that the leadership of the Bolsheviks (as well as the Social Revolutionary Party-which was a much larger group) was predominantly Jewish. No less an authority than Winston Churchill wrote an article for the Illustrated Sunday Herald (London) in February 1920, entitled „Zionism versus Bolshevism: A Struggle for the Soul of the Jewish People,“ in which he pointed out that Jews dominated the short-lived Communist regimes of Bela Kun in Hungary and Kurt Eisner in Bavaria no less than in Lenin's Russia.

Rosenberg's extensive reading certainly reinforced his personal observations. He had read the works of Paul de Lagarde, a nineteenth-century professor of oriental languages at Göttingen University who was strongly anti-Semitic. He had read the Frenchman, Count



Arthur de Gobineau, whose book, *On the Inequality of Human Races*, is the seminal work of racist thinking. Above all, he had read, at the age of seventeen, Houston Stewart Chamberlain's monumental *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. This last is intensely anti-Jewish and anti-Catholic.

The Aryan race has been the creative force in all civilization. The modern Germans and their kindred peoples are the current bearers of this creative and civilizing force (a view shared, among others, by Theodore Roosevelt and Cecil Rhodes). Southern Europe is a miscegenated „chaos of the peoples“ and the Jew, above all, is the eternal enemy of Aryan values and Aryan culture.

Rosenberg, in his memoirs, tells us that this book of Chamberlain's „set him at once on fire.“ Chamberlain, it might be mentioned in passing, was the son of a British admiral and the son-in-law of Richard Wagner. But it was in post-war Germany that the final influence must have shaped Rosenberg's thinking. He had visited German relatives before the war. Until 1918, however, he had been a student at Moscow University. He graduated in Architecture, a field he never subsequently pursued. He must have been a talented student, however, for he was asked by his professor to remain at the University as a member of the faculty.

Instead he made his way to a defeated, humiliated and starving Germany, apparently by way of Paris. The leadership of the radical Left parties, the Communists, the Social Democrats, the Independent Socialists and the Spartacists, was mostly Jewish. It had been these elements which had promoted disastrous strikes in the last year of the war and had been largely instrumental in tormenting the insurrections and the naval mutiny which led to the abdication of the Kaiser and the establishment of the so-called Weimar Republic.

Whether Germany could have long continued to resist the enormous power of the Allies, especially after the total collapse of her own three allies, is a moot point. But it was commonly felt throughout Germany that the total defeat and utter helplessness of Germany before the triumphant victors was precipitated and made inevitable by treason on the home front in which Jewish influence was the greatest factor and that, but for this, Germany might have held out long enough to secure a truly negotiated peace rather than submit to a merciless *Diktat*.

Nor was this all. Until hated Tsarist Russia had been overthrown and defeated, worried Jewry and, especially, German Jewry had supported the cause of the central powers. After that, Jewish support switched to the allies. The negotiations in 1916 which led up to the Balfour Declaration of the following year were later admitted by the British wartime Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, to have been undertaken because of the need felt to win the support of the Zionist movement throughout the world. There exists strongly suggestive evidence that the success of this ploy created a *quidpro quo* situation between the British government and the powerful American Zionists who, in turn, brought irresistible pressure on President Wilson to bring about the decisive participation of the United States in the war.

In any event, the Weimar Republic which lasted from the end of 1918 to the beginning of 1933, was politically a middle-of-the-road democracy. Socially it was a period of extreme libertarianism and, indeed, license. Berlin came to be seen by traditionalist and conservative observers as the „cesspool of Europe.“ To others, it was the haven of total permissiveness where anything went and every passion and vice could be indulged with impunity. Istvan Deak, who admired Berlin society of the period, wrote of it:

**Berlin harbored those who elsewhere might have been subjected to ridicule or persecution. Comintern agents. Dadaist poets, expressionist painters, anarchist philosophers, *Sexualwissenschaftler*, vegetarian and Esperantist prophets of a new humanity. *Schnorrer* („freeloaders,“ artists of coffeehouse indolence) courtesans, homosexuals, drug addicts, naked dancers, and professional criminals flourished in a city which was hungry for the new, the sensational, the extreme. Moreover, Berlin became the cultural center of Central and Eastern Europe as well.**

Peter Gay, another well-known Jewish historian, in a book with a significant sub-title (*Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider*), writes in a similar vein, telling us that when we think of Weimar, we think of modernity in art, literature and thought; we think of the rebellion of sons against fathers, Dadaists against art, libertines against old-fashioned moralists; we think of the *The Threepenny Opera*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *The Magic Mountain*, the Bauhaus, Marlene Dietrich . . .

Die *Weltbühne* was the most prominent and influential of the left-wing literary journals. Not to have read the latest issue, according to Kurt Hiller, was considered uncouth. Of the sixty-eight writers whose religious origins could be established, forty-two were found to be of Jewish descent, two were half-Jews and only twenty-four were non-Jews (of whom three were married to Jewesses) Deak tells us: „The enthusiasm of the *Weltbühne* writers for revolutionary



socialist propositions was to a great part due to the recognition of their inescapable Jewish condition. „

Deak tells us further, but with an air of approbation, that of those who now dictated public taste and morals and „corrupted their customers“, more than three-fourths were not natives, but came from Austria, Hungary, the Ukraine and Poland. These were the people whom Walter Rathenau, himself a Jew, called „an Asiatic horde on the Brandenburg sands. „

The late Sir. Arthur Bryant, a respected historian and a conservative Christian gentleman, wholly out of sympathy with the Nazi regime which followed the Weimar period, is by reason of those very qualities and traits a most reliable source is dealing with the nature of the Weimar Republic. In his book, *Unfinished Victory*, which was published just before the outbreak of World War II, he describes in vivid and evocative language the alien quality of the „200,000 or more Jews“ who thronged Berlin. Many of them (he says) had poured into the country during the post-war upheaval. They did not stay poor long. Bryant points out that as late as November 1938, after five years of anti-Jewish legislation, Jews still owned about one-third of all real property in the Reich, most of it acquired during the disastrous inflation of 1923 with foreign funds obtained through their international connections.

In 1924, Viscount D'Abernon, the British ambassador, held a conversation with Gustav Stresemann in which the latter spoke of the growing hatred of the Jews. „The mass of the people,“ said Stresemann, „are discontented because they find that they themselves are poor while the Jews are rich, and they ask, ‘why has the government allowed this?’ „

Bryant says that although the Jews comprised only one percent of the population, their control of the national wealth and power soon lost all relation to their numbers. In the 1924 *Reichstag*, a quarter of the Social Democrats were Jews. Jews controlled 57% of the metal trade, 22% of the grain, and 39% of the textile. More than 50% of the members of the Berlin Chamber of Commerce were Jews, as were 1,200 of the 1,474 members of the Stock Exchange. Of the 29 legitimate theaters in Berlin, 23 had Jewish directors. At one point, says Bryant (quoting an anti-Nazi book by E. Mowrer, *Germany Puts the Clock Back*), so complete was the Jewish monopoly of the Press that „a telephone connection between [sic] three Jews in Ministerial Offices could effect the suspension of any newspaper in the State.“

Authorship, continues Bryant, was almost a Jewish monopoly. In 1931, of 144 film scripts worked, 119 were written by Jews and 77 produced by them. Medicine and law followed the same pattern; 42% of the Berlin doctors were Jews (1,932) and 48% of the lawyers. „Every year it became harder for a Gentile to gain or keep a foothold in any privileged occupation. „

In Walter Mehring's play *The Merchant of Berlin*, the hero, a poverty-stricken Jewish immigrant,

...soon has the whole town at his feet with his wonderful adroitness and freedom from bourgeois moral scruples ... he derides every cherished symbol of German morality and national pride and holds them up to ridicule. The soldier's corpse and steel helmet ... swept away with the scourings of the street, are shown to weigh nothing ... against the predatory courage, the quick cunning and the rollicking sensual opportunism of the little hero. To the disinherited German they stood for something very different for love of country, duty now shamed and made the sport of the gutter. Human beings with their long and diverse histories cannot always be expected to see things in the same way.

Bryant points out that beggars on horseback are seldom popular and that this particular species was arrogant, vulgar and vicious. In a particularly moving passage, he speaks of his vivid and painful recollection of seeing the throngs of half-starving children of both sexes who haunted the doors of the great hotels and restaurants to sell their bodies to rich *arrivistes*.

There follow several pages in Bryant's book of detailed description of the contents of display windows of bookshops specializing in pornography and the literature of perversion, and of the general moral degradation in daily life and in art. Bryant is distressed, too, by the undisguised scorn for Christianity-a Jewish poet's (Carl Zuckmayer) comparing a cat caterwauling on the roof at night with Jesus at Bethsemane, or a Jewish writer's depicting Christ as a drunken lecher.

Major Francis Yeats-Brown (*European Jungle*) adds a few figures to Bryant's, relative to the disproportionate power of Jews in the professions. He tells us that in Berlin 1,925 out of 3,450 lawyers were Jews and in Frankfurt, 432 out of 659. Fifteen Jewish bankers held 718 directorships. In Vienna, 85% of the lawyers, 70% of the dentists, more than 50% of the physicians, were Jews. The boot and shoe industry was 80% Jewish, as were the newspapers; the banks, 75%; the wine trade, 73%; the cinema, 70%; lumber and paper, 70%; fur and furriers, 87%; bakeries and laundries, 60%.



Even Dr. Chaim Weizmann, who was visiting Germany at the height of the immediate post-war economic distress in order to raise money for the Jewish immigrants in Palestine, spoke disparagingly of the Jews in Germany. He told the British Ambassador that Jewish intellectuals in Germany were most overbearing and aggressive, and quite intolerable. Most significantly, he referred to them as „a race apart, differing widely from the native races.“ But the „race apart“ dominated the culture and many, if not most, of the professions, as we have indicated above. Peter Gay, writing of the vast Ullstein publishing empire, says that their power was almost frightening and that for a writer without a private income the favor of Ullstein meant luxury, its disfavor near-starvation.

In the flourishing theater, even the great classics were cut, edited and distorted to fit the exigencies of left-wing propaganda. Leopold Jessner, whom Gay calls „the most powerful man in the Weimar theater,“ staged a deliberate distortion of Schiller’s *Wilhelm Tell* in which all the patriotic references to Fatherland were cut and the play converted into a call for revolution. The tyrant Gessler was portrayed as a bemedalled caricature of a Junker general. Albert Bassermann played Tell and Fritz Kortner played Gessler. Both were Jews. The production was in 1919. Well might Gay say:

Hugo Preuss, the architect of the Weimar Constitution, was a symbol of the revolution; as a Jew and a left-wing democrat ... he, the outsider, gave shape to the new Republic, his Republic.

In his study of the *Weltbühne*, Deak tells us that it was the duty of that journal to plead the case of the convicted criminal, the abortionist mother, the homosexual, and the prostitute. In 1925, Erich Leiser, in its pages, was demanding legalized abortion. The magazine ardently espoused the cause of George Groß in his trial (he was acquitted) for publishing a blasphemous cartoon. Kurt Hiller demanded the abolition of laws against homosexuality, and Magnus Hirschfeld objected even to the prohibition against adult immorality with children.

Kurt Tucholsky, a *Weltbühne* editor, wrote that the journal served a good cause, that of transforming *Teutschland* into *Deutschland*. (*Teutschland* is an archaic form used symbolically to represent all that was traditional and historic in Germany.) A brief glance at some of Tucholsky’s utterances and attitudes as reported in Deak’s work might well epitomize this limited sampling of our subject. That „ . . . Judaism and unquestioning German patriotism were mutually exclusive propositions - - „ may well be true, and Tucholsky seems to have sought out every sensitive and exposed nerve he could find in order to play upon it. His favorite target was the Army. German officers during the war, he declared, had cared more for their whores than their men. In a brilliant but savage pun on *Ein Volk der Dichter und Denker*; (a people of poets and thinkers), he called the German people „*Ein Volk der Richter und Henker*“ („a people of judges and hangmen“):

... we betray a state that we disavow . . . The country I am allegedly betraying is not my country; this state is not my state; this legal system is not my legal system. Its different banners are to me as meaningless as are its provincial ideals.

Tucholsky finally gave up the editorship of *Weltbühne* and went to live in Paris. His successor was convicted of betraying military secrets and sentenced to imprisonment in 1931.

In music (or perhaps anti-music) the name of Arnold Schönberg is prominent. The prophet of atonality developed his twelve-tone system and *Sprechgesang* in 1924. In the following year came the first performance of Alben Berg’s opera *Wozzeck*, which used Schönberg’s system. The „hero“ is an ignorant soldier who commits murder and suicide. In 1928 Bertolt Brecht’s *Die Dreigroschenoper* opened at the *Schiffbauerdamm*, with music by Kurt Weill. The milieu of the play is the *lumpenproletariat* world of prostitutes, thieves and beggars, Barbara Sapinsley describes it as „a burlesque of modern society showing it ruled by a criminal underworld.“ Mackie Messer, says Gay taunts his bourgeois audience for loving its own fat belly and assures it „*Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral.*“

Deak denies that Brecht was a Jew but admits that in at least two publications he is so listed. Deak’s own attitudes may be evaluated by his statement that „ . . . such Communists as Bertholt Brecht . . . [and others] . . . were responsible for much of the cultural brilliance and vitality of the Weimar period.“

Another diabolic vision is to be found in the works of Franz Kafka. Günther Anders, discussing Kafka’s art, compares the latter’s concept of beauty to the Gorgon’s head. Kafka argues that the existence of evil proves the existence of an evil God: divine authority, the law, and evil, are one. The essential Jewish quality of Kafka’s thought, says Anders, lies in his total rejection of the concept of „Nature,“ of a world apart from man and man’s institutions as an untouched preserve of loveliness and reverence.



A word must be said on an institution whose lifespan coincided exactly with that of the Republic itself-the Bauhaus. The Bauhaus was opened by Walter Gropius in the city of Weimar in 1919 as a school of „artistic unity.“ The names associated with it were not all those of Jews. Gropius himself was not a Jew (Franz Werfel converted from Judaism to Catholicism). But most of the important figures in the circles were Jews -Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Lyonel Feininger, Gerhard Marcks, Oskar Schlemmer, Laslo Moholy-Nagy, Josef Albers, *inter alia*. Its ultimate mood was „frantic pessimism.“ In 1925 the citizens of Weimar expelled the Bauhaus artists from their town, says Deak, from where they moved, via Dessau, to Berlin.

Such then was the Germany to which the young Rosenberg came from Bolshevik Russia and which he surveyed with loathing, anger and disgust. And thus he began his fateful career in the nascent National Socialist German Workers Party. He joined the party in 1919 having attended a meeting at which he immediately and permanently fell under Hitler's spell. In 1921, he became the editor of the party newspaper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*. He contributed a great many articles and wrote and published some relatively minor books. After Hitler and Hess were imprisoned at *Landsberg* in 1924, Rosenberg became a kind of custodian of the, then, interdicted Nazi party. In due course, he became head of the foreign policy office of the party (not to be confused with the government foreign office) and was also in charge of defining party policy with regard to secondary and higher education. In 1940, he headed a special staff which had the responsibility of collecting and safeguarding the art treasures of the occupied Eastern territories. This gave rise to the charge against him at Nuremberg of the wholesale looting of art treasures. It might be salutary to recall in passing that some 6,000 German paintings were „liberated“ by the American occupation authorities after World War II and shipped to the United States to be stored at Pueblo, Colorado. President Carter recently refused a request by the Bonn regime to return the paintings to their German owners.

In 1941, Rosenberg was given the responsibility of setting up the civil administration of the occupied Russian and Baltic territories. The appointment seems to have been-or soon to have become-a merely ceremonial position. His nominal subordinates, men like Erich Koch and Heinrich Löhse, exercised the real administrative power. As for the SS., it was under the control of Heinrich Himmler and quite independent from Rosenberg's office.

At Nuremberg, Rosenberg was also charged with having encouraged the invasion of Norway. This really was a monstrous piece of Allied hypocrisy. Norwegian coastal waters had already been deliberately violated by the British navy, as in the case of the Altmark incident. At the time of the German invasion, an Anglo-French expeditionary force was already in the process of being formed and the Germans simply beat it to the punch. Such was the immediate confusion that Neville Chamberlain even uttered the hollow boast that „Hitler has missed the bus“ when the Allies landed at Narvik.

When Rosenberg's life and career are examined with impartiality and detachment -as one would hope were possible after so long a period of time has elapsed- one is forced to the conclusion-that his real „crime“ was racism and, more specifically, anti-Semitism. He was hanged, it would appear, for what he thought and wrote. The American prosecutor hammered away on this point. Rosenberg's writings, he charged, were instrumental in the rise of the Nazi party to power. It seems a strange sort of indictment coming from the representative of a power which is always so smugly self-congratulatory about the First Amendment.

Rosenberg was twice married. His first wife, Hilda Leesmann, was a ballet student and an accomplished classical pianist. He met her in Riga and they were married in 1915. She contracted tuberculosis, apparently as a result of the dreadful privations attendant upon the war in Eastern Europe and during the Bolshevik Revolution. She went to Switzerland in 1918. Alfred and she did not see each other again and in 1923 he allowed her to divorce him. In 1925, he married Hedwig Kramer. They had one son who died in infancy and a daughter, Irene, born in 1930. Hedwig and Irene withdrew as far as possible from public life and notice after 1946.

Why should anyone read the *Mythos* today? It is open to much criticism as a book. It is not a scientific treatise on race. It is not a lofty, detached (I will not say „impartial“ because historical impartiality is a noble illusion, impossible to attain) work of history, Rosenberg is no stylist. His mind races ahead of his syntax and one subordinate clause after another attach themselves to his original sentences. The result, all too often, reminds the reader of Mark Twain's dictum: „whenever the literary German dives into a sentence, that is the last you are going to see of him till he emerges on the other side of the Atlantic with the verb in his mouth.“ His citations do not conform to the accepted canons of scholarship. While patently honest and authentic, they are often incomplete as to publishing data.

But when all these negative aspects have been given due notice, there remains a battery of the most powerful arguments for reading him. For students of history, the *Mythos* is an important historical document. For students of politics and political psychology, it is equally so. There is vast and most impressive erudition. It might not be too high-flown to say that



there is the soul of a man and, perhaps of a nation-or at least of an epoch-on display. Our knowledge and understanding of the ideology and the Zeitgeist of the Third Reich and, indeed, of its immediate antecedents, is seriously incomplete without the Mythos.

It is not the function of the writer of an Introduction to another man's work to adumbrate the contents and arguments of that work. Still less is it his function to analyze and argue the pros and cons of the argumentation or the validity of the author's views. Briefly, therefore, and in conclusion, Rosenberg's view is that the various races of man possess racial souls. These racial souls are as enduring and immutable as the racial phenotype-no more and no less. They give rise to cultures, values, religions and political systems which are uniquely congruent with the race in question and are alien to any other race. Miscegenation brings about the degeneration and destruction of such cultures by reason of a kind of schizophrenic condition of racial bastardy. Aryan man has created all the great civilizations of ancient India, ancient Persia, Greece, Rome and, probably, Egypt. Each has ultimately decayed and fallen by reason of race-mixing.

It is certainly not a new idea. Juvenal in the second century, contemplating the polyglot, polyracial population of a Rome which by then was mainly made up of Levantines, Egyptians and other Near Eastern immigrants, uttered his famous warning: „In Tibetim defluxit Orontes.“ The last great Aryan civilization is that created by the Teutonic branches of the Aryan race since the fall of Rome. That civilization is now threatened by a rebellion and resurgence of the non-Aryan elements-especially the Jews and Levantine Christianity. The natural values of Aryan man include the concept of honor which takes precedence over the Christian ethics of diffuse and undirected love and pity. The Aryan pantheon is one of sky-gods, not earth or subterranean (cthonian) deities. Aryan society is partriarchal rather than matriachal. Aryan man is the first and only racial-type which has been able to construct rational scientific and investigatory systems of thought, free from superstitious or religious corruptions. Why did Rosenberg think that way? What evidence or argumentation does he offer to support his case? For that, patient reader, you must read his book.

**Peter Peel Reseda, California 1981**

Posted by **Neues Europa** at **15:17:00**



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